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MEMOIR

OF

REV. MORRILL ALLEN,

BY

T. P. DOGGETT.

Pastor of the First Parish in Pembroke.

C. Allen



MEMOIR

OF THE

Rev. Merrill Allen,

OF PEMBROKE, MASS.

by Rev. Theodore Tilton, D.D.

PLYMOUTH:

PLYMOUTH ROCK PRESS.

1870.

Preface.

THE children of late MR. ALLEN, knowing that their father was deeply averse to all undue eulogizing of the dead, and feeling themselves no less averse to everything which might seem to savor of ostentation, were quite reluctant in consenting to the publication of this memoir. But the writer is quite sure that it contains no eulogistic utterances which the departed did not deserve; and that it will be most gratifying to a large circle outside of his family, who entertained towards him no other sentiments but those of friendship, respect and veneration. Besides, it is believed that short biographical sketches of those like him, who have been truly faithful and useful in the humbler walks of public life, will exert a more extensive and salutary influence over the risen and



PREFACE.

rising generations, than the lives of persons whose career has been far more brilliant and widely known. When they read the life of a great man, few feel that they can be like him. They feel that even to entertain the idea would be consummate vanity, and therefore make no attempt to imitate this type of excellence and distinction. But when they peruse a memoir of a person like him who is the subject of this, *his* endowments and opportunities being more nearly on a level with their own, they are able to cherish a reasonable hope that they, too, can become equally useful and respected, and are thus stimulated to imitate the good example of which they have read. It is with a full belief in the correctness of these views, and a due regard to the solicitations of many friends, that the writer of this sketch is induced to publish it, and dedicate it to the Pembroke Parish, of which he is Pastor.



Memoir.

FROM a brief autobiography we learn that Mr. Allen, was born at Dover, Mass., April 3d, 1776. He was the son of Capt. Hezekiah Allen, and the fifteenth child of his father, who had a second wife, and the tenth of his mother, whose maiden name was Mary Peters.

His parents belonged to the Calvinistic order, and to the most respectable and substantial portion of the inhabitants of his birth-place. The occupation of farming afforded them a comfortable livelihood, but not an income sufficiently ample to educate their children in academic halls. Young Morrill, the subject of this memoir, was not satisfied with the limited and imperfect education which the common schools, at that time, afforded. He thirsted for a

higher culture, and his literary tastes prompted him to seek it in the study of a private teacher. There he pursued the studies which were preparatory to his entrance on a college course. He entered Brown University in the autumn of 1795, and graduated with honor, in 1798. During his residence in college he was a diligent student, and his whole deportment was upright and pure. The merit of such diligence and deportment is enhanced by the consideration that the government of the institution at that time was far from being stringent, and if a scholar devoted his time to his studies, and maintained purity of habits and character it was from personal choice, from a virtuous self-denial, rather than from any compulsion or restraint on the part of the college authorities. He did not possess much of that sober, plodding devotion to books which trims the midnight lamp, and shuts the door

against light-hearted and buoyant companionship ; possessing a temperament that was humorous and social, he could enter heartily into every kind of innocent sport and greatly enjoy a merry time. A young man with such proclivities, would be likely to be foremost in all those sly combinations which have been often formed among college students, to do secretly all sorts of mischief, not probably from any bad, malicious motive, but simply to give vent to the pent up element of fun and merriment. A description of these combinations might make a long, amusing, but somewhat dark chapter in the history of collegiate life. Mr. Allen, always kept clear from such combinations, and while he avoided disturbing the feelings of his teachers by these youthful frivolities, he had a peculiar way to maintain his popularity among those of his fellow-students who indulged in them the most.

The perilous temptations which he manfully encountered and conquered in college, served to strengthen his character and invigorate his virtue; and when he graduated, it was evident that the *heart* as well as the head, had undergone a discipline which contributed to prepare him for the profession which he afterwards chose. As the general course of his life, from early youth, always seemed to be tending in the right direction, he could not point to any particular time when he had undergone a marked, special conversion. He felt that what he most needed was, not *conversion*, but *improvement*, a constant progress in the right way, which he was conscious of having deliberately chosen. Neither could he point to a time when he was singularly impressed that he should choose the sacred profession for his calling. Though the Calvinistic theory of thorough-going depravity and supernatural conversion, which

he learned in the Assembly's Catechism in early life, never at any time received the full assent of his growing intellect, yet the influence and example of pious parents who adopted the theory, nominally at least, produced, no doubt, salutary impressions on the days of his early boyhood. Full of life and cheerful gait, he could not bear that austere gravity which frowns upon all amusements and the manifestations of innocent joyousness; but at the same time, he cherished a profound respect for that religion which demands that the habits, feelings and passions, shall be kept in due subjection to the sober dictates of reason and conscience, and requires, principally, purity of intention and rectitude of life. While his own character grew gradually into conformity with such a religion, he felt more and more deeply a desire to preach it to others, and that desire dictated the choice of his profession.

It may be proper to pause here a moment, and consider the difficulties which Mr. Allen, in early life, must have encountered in obtaining an education. Being the youngest of several brothers, and belonging to a family where many little things are to be done daily, he acted, he says, the part of an errand boy, and, amid many calls made upon him, from one and another, he had but little time to devote to his books. Much of his boyhood, too, was occupied in severe labor on a poorly cultivated farm.

Had it not been for the timely aid of domestic friends, and that indomitable perseverance which characterised his life throughout, the early hindrances to an education would have been insurmountable. He dealt with difficulties, as a lion does with the insects that cross his path, he brushed them aside, and went on his way undiscouraged and cheerful. Always seem-

ing to conform to the wishes of his parents, he found much encouragement in the fact that it was their desire that the son of their old age should, in some manner, obtain a better education than the schools then afforded. But as the father did not possess the means of rendering pecuniary assistance in this work, he encouraged his son to spend his summers in laboring on the farm and to devote his winters to study. The boy Morrill, cheerfully accepted this parental advice, and by persevering adherence to this course of alternate labor and study, occasionally reciting lessons and obtaining instructions in the more difficult branches at the residence of a learned clergyman, he gradually completed the course of study requisite for an entrance to an advance standing in Brown University.

During his college course, repeated interruptions were inevitable in order to enable him to meet the expenses attending

it. Being left almost entirely dependent upon his own exertions for the prompt payment of college bills, he was obliged to resort often to that most useful and most honorable expedient, whereby many eminent men have discharged the debts incurred by their earlier education. The expedient to which I refer is, school-teaching. Mr. Allen engaged in this, with much zeal and energy, and all his attempts in this department of literary labor were marked by eminent success. Although there was nothing imposing or commanding in his physical figure, being small in stature, yet there was something about him, a straight forward firmness and force of character which inspired respect, and made him an excellent disciplinarian. He taught school after school, each numbering more than a hundred scholars, with so much success and credit to himself, that his services were sought, and in high demand

in every place where his name was known. His love of this employment, and his remarkable success in it, well nigh determined him at one time to pursue it as a permanent calling. It was sufficiently lucrative to supply him with funds to liquidate the expenses of his college life. This laborious occupation of teaching, followed up from year to year, while, at the same time, he pursued a course of study that kept up his attainments equal to those of his college classmates, must have required great energy of resolution as well as activity of intellect. Many a brilliant and ambitious student, under such labors, has broken down in early life, and never been able afterwards to prosecute vigorously any chosen profession. But it was not so with Mr. Allen. Although his powers, both mental and bodily, were greatly tasked, yet not disproportionately or unduly, and he left college not only

with a well-fraught mind, but with a constitution uninjured by any violation of physical laws.

Soon after graduating, he commenced the study of theology. There being at that time no institution where a young man could go to gain a fit preparation for the ministry, he entered his name as a divinity student, at the residence of Dr. Fobes, of Raynham, a preacher of popular talents, and commanding eloquence and influence among the clergy of that day. After remaining with him two years, some of which time was devoted to school teaching, he offered himself as a candidate for settlement in the *ministry*. After preaching acceptably at several places, he received an invitation to settle over the first church and society in Pembroke, Mass. The invitation was accepted, and he was ordained there on the *Ninth of December*, 1801. In the following May, he married

the daughter of Hon. Josiah Dean, of Raynham, Bristol County, a lady to whose energy, and unwearied industry, and judicious management of everything pertaining to family affairs, he has borne a touching testimony, telling us in some fragmentary writings, found among his papers, that the health and prosperity of their numerous children are attributable mainly to her exertions. It would be pleasant to make here a digression in which she might be set forth almost as the model mother and wife.

The juxtaposition of these two events, his settlement and his marriage, brought upon Mr. A. then, as it has upon many a young minister, a heavy burden of responsibilities and cares. Having at that time little to live upon outside of his salary of \$475, he found that inadequate to the supply of his actual needs. This, however, did not discourage his resolute and trusting heart, but served only to develop greater

capabilities. The more he had to do, the more power from on high He had given him to do it. Thus he experienced a full realization of the promise "that as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Mr. Allen's ministry, commencing in his early manhood and continuing to the age of sixty-five, was associated in the minds of his people with all that was most dear and interesting to their hearts. Tender and affecting were the recollections which thronged their minds at his burial. They remembered the clearness and brevity with which he expounded. and inculcated the divine oracles from the sacred desk. Sunday after Sunday, for more than forty years, did he do faithfully and well this sacred work. Although he never had the voice, or lungs, or manner, to make him an eloquent speaker, in the popular sense of the phrase, yet he always had the gift not only to instruct but to *interest* those who

heard him. He was considered quite original in his manner of presenting and illustrating scriptural truth.

The clear-sighted wisdom, the sound judgment and the good common sense which belong to his character, showed themselves always in his pulpit preparations. While many clergymen, in the early part of his ministry, were accustomed to deliver discourses that were long, prosy and full of reiterations of the same thought, his were always brief, never tedious, and such as could be truly applied to practice in the common business of life. Of the multitude of sermons delivered in the course of a single year, not one of them, he thought, should attempt to do more than set forth a single point and impress it upon the hearer. Early adopting this idea, he adhered to it, and practiced upon it, and it greatly facilitated that brevity and comprehensiveness to which he always

aimed. If, in the course of his meditations, he found a subject branching itself out into extensive relations to other topics, embracing a wide field of thought, instead of pursuing it in all its ramifications, his love for brevity prompted the confinement of his mind to one branch of it, reserving the rest, perhaps, for a series of discourses. In this way, after preaching forty years, he could still find fresh subjects to employ his pen. The quickness and tenacity of his memory were such, that after writing a discourse, it did not require a long time to enable him to repeat it memoriter. Hence, in most of his intellectual performances, where no written manuscript was to be used in presence of an audience, he commonly adopted this method of preparation. He might, undoubtedly, have adopted it often in his ordinary pulpit exercises, had he possessed any ambition to impress the people that he was gifted with a ready

command of language. But no such ambition belonged to the man. All he aimed at was to present divine truths in such a manner that they might be distinctly understood, felt and followed in the affairs of each one's daily life. Hence his discourses in general were remarkable for plainness and simplicity, and eminently practical.

If we follow Mr. Allen from the pulpit to other departments of the profession, his excellence and usefulness as a minister will be still more apparent. Of a minister's labors, that of preparing the Sunday discourses is generally considered the greatest. Without doubt the burden of thought and toil lies here. But with many, officiating at funerals requires a preparation that makes a large part of this most anxious labor. How far this was true of Mr. Allen, I am not informed. But it is well known that his exercises on these

occasions, although brief, like his discourses, were generally marked by appropriateness and pathos. They took deep hold upon the sympathies of his nature, and it was this fact that made his words interesting and consolatory. At the burial of beloved parishioners, his efforts to control and suppress his own deep emotions were oftentimes apparent, and produced a tremulousness of voice which not only deeply affected the hearer, but made the mourner feel that of all present, the pastor participated the most heartily in his sorrows. From these opportunities of cultivating and manifesting sympathy with the sorrowful, there grew up unconsciously between him and his people many tender and life-long attachments.

Mr. Allen, in his daily intercourse with those whom he chanced to meet in his parish was never formal and reserved, but always social, easy and often humorous.

To be cheerful, to say things that would excite laughter, was a part of his nature, was the spontaneous outflow of it. In serious conversation on important matters, one would often see cropping out a vein of cheerful wit. Wherever he met his people, whether on the street, or in the field, or at their homes, the few moments he stopped with them, he would usually have something to say that was useful and instructive, or something that was adapted to make the too sober and desponding smile. The playful gayety of spirit which was natural to him, was so governed that he could be cheerful without being frivolous, serious without being austere. He enjoyed a joke and laugh, and loved to pass an hour in hearing or relating anecdotes of the manners and men of other days. He never belonged to that class of the clergy who consider merriment incompatible with Christianity. He felt that

cheerfulness, chastened indeed by the various discipline of Providence, was the spirit of all true religion, that if any one has reason to show in his countenance the aspect of a placid joy, that person is he who has a living Christian faith, believing without a particle of doubt, that the Infinite Father has in store for him heavenly happiness, in a grander and more joyful world than earth.

Mr. Allen's visits among his parishioners were not numerous, and these were so acceptable when made, that the people, perhaps, might well regret and complain that they were so few and far between. His avocations at home were so various and arduous as to leave little time for this part of professional duty. The temporal wants of an increasing family were to be supplied, their minds to be duly developed and cultivated with knowledge, while several boys, from abroad, taken into his family to be

educated. claimed a large fraction of his time. With these weighty cares upon his mind, enough of themselves to exhaust the energies of an ordinary constitution, he must retire to his study to do the minister's main work, to prepare his discourses, and amid all this, liable to be interrupted with calls to attend the funerals of a large parish, or to give consolation at the bedside of the sick. After the performance of such duties and labors as these, his intercourse with his people, at their own homes. could not be otherwise than limited. But the lack of frequent pastoral calls never seemed to operate as an obstacle to his usefulness or his popularity. He had no austere dignity of manner, no cold reserve about him to make himself unapproachable, and keep his people at a distance. Though they saw him not often or long at any time at their houses, yet they were perfectly acquainted with their pastor, could be fa-

miliar with him as a boy, and always felt perfectly free to open before him their feelings, wants and views on any subject that might interest them.

The pecuniary embarrassments which attended the commencement of his ministerial life seem to render it necessary that he should devote a portion of his time and talents to other objects than those which belonged to the sphere of his profession. His previous success in teaching, and his love of it, dictated at once the plan of receiving scholars into his family. Students came from different parts of the country to receive his instructions, and some of them who have since acted their parts well in the world, and arisen to distinction, have had the pleasure on different occasions to meet the venerable teacher of their youth, assuring him that his instructions, discipline and council have been instrumental in guiding and elevating them to useful

and honorable positions. Such testimony must have been peculiarly gratifying to a man like him, whose humility and modesty made him inclined always to underrate the usefulness and value of his own efforts.

His school continued to increase from year to year, until the pupils became so numerous that he was obliged to appropriate to their instruction more time than was consistent with health and the duties of his profession. His constitution was such that he needed more out-door employment than most men, and his increasing school, together with parish and pulpit duties, were altogether too confining, and too much for the most robust constitution. He escaped ill health by a timely relinquishment of his school, and substituting in place of it a small farm that afforded him the kind of exercise he most needed. He hoped, also, by a skilful management of the farm, not only to preserve and improve his health,

but to realize enough profit to compensate for the deficiency occasioned by the dismissal of his scholars. The profits of agriculture must have been vastly different then from what they are now, otherwise we should smile at this plan as preposterous. No one, in these days, expects to make money to any great extent by farming. But in the hands of Mr. Allen it seemed to assume a power of producing wealth which few ever thought it possessed. He brought to it a sagacious and cultivated mind, and by observing and patiently investigating the productive properties of different kinds of soil, and the result of various mixtures, he formed theories which, instead of being chimerical or utopian, as many are, were found to work admirably well in practice. His earnest attention to this great branch of human industry has made him, in this part of our State, a somewhat famous personage in the history of agricultural

improvements of modern times. Some one has said that he who has made one spear of grass grow where nothing grew before, becomes a benefactor of his race. If this be true, Mr. Allen eminently deserves that name, independently of his efficient labors in the ministry. His skill as a farmer became so great that his name in the minds of many was associated at one time with agriculture more closely than with the ministerial profession. His marked success in this new occupation added to that which always attended his efforts in teaching, while at the same time he was performing faithfully his arduous duties as a minister, may be referred to as evidence not only of indefatigable industry, but an unusual versatility of talent. All this various work, to which he successfully devoted his powers, soon attracted attention beyond his own parish and town, and inspired the people of his county with a confidence in

his good judgement and ability, which showed itself in electing him to unsought offices of public trust.

Some may have thought that his taste for agriculture interfered with his usefulness as a minister; but it is believed that by being out much in the open field, both mind and body were made more vigorous, so that he was thereby enabled to accomplish more mental work and gain a better preparation for the pulpit than he would by a closer confinement to study, unaccompanied by the exercise he needed in the field. It must not be forgotten that the amount of mental labor depends not so much upon the time employed in it, as it does upon the mind's energy of application. Mr. Allen understood this perfectly well, and he well knew how to proportion his time between physical toil and study, in order to secure to the mind fresh energy and its greatest power of thought and inves-

tigation. The time given to his farm was not used so much in hand-work as *head-work*, in vigorous calculation, in studying plans of improvement, in making a selection of different soils for different crops.

When, in connection with other avocations, he commenced the business of agriculture, little or nothing had been said or done to turn talent in this direction, or to show that it might be made an intellectual and lucrative employment. In respect to this point you will be interested in hearing his own words:—

“In this work,” says he, “not much aid could be drawn from experience. The methods familiarized in early life, and those in which farmers generally then practiced, were very unsatisfactory. There was a strong impression that much more profit might and ought to be realized from the amount of labor bestowed on farms. A determination was formed to

innovate on established practices, with the risk of incurring the censure and ridicule of surrounding farmers, and making many mistakes involving personal losses. The risk was great, for at that time few aids were attainable in the formation of a new theory. The renovating influences of philosophical investigation, which had to great extent changed the face of cultivated fields in Europe, had scarcely dawned on this country. Even an allusion to anything which had been written in a book on the subject of farming, exposed a man to be at once classed, in the popular voice, with fanciful and useless projectors. In opposition to prevalent prejudices, Mr. Allen took for his text-books, Deane's Georgical Dictionary, Elliott's Essays and Jethro Tull's Field Husbandry, and commenced a series of experiments which occasioned much mirth in the neighborhood, and many predictions that the minister's

farming would prove a sorrowful failure, and no pattern for any wise man's imitation. The time necessary to complete experiments gave jeerers ample opportunities to multiply criticism and reproaches. Happily for the experimenter, so great success attended his labors that in a few years the language of ridicule was changed into that of praise, in some instances, perhaps, beyond merit. Piles of surface earth on the road-side, were at first contemptuously called 'Allenites,' afterwards the same term was continued in honor of the supposed originator of a practice so important to the productiveness of fields. The products of the farm and the salary ere long placed the possessor in a situation that changed the language of prediction that failure must attend his course, into a charge of growing rich too rapidly for a minister in a country parish. Clergymen are generally too rich or too poor for

the taste of a whole parish, and the complainers, in assigning the causes of either situation, are likely to say many things calculated to lessen the influences of official services. Every minister who ventures to engage in other than professional business, is exposed to censures which may essentially affect his usefulness. In the case now in view, it is not known that censure did much mischief. The parish were generally aware of the insufficiency of the salary, and thought their minister had better labor with his hands for a portion of his bread, as Paul did, than render himself burdensome by begging at their doors. With something of divided attention between the parish and the farm, Mr. Allen lived very peaceably with his people for more than forty years."

This lengthy quotation from his autobiography, shows with what zeal and brave perseverance he took hold of this greatest

branch of human industry, without relinquishing in the least his hold upon his profession. It appears to have been his purpose not only to make a much needed addition to his income, but to do a substantial service to the community by introducing a new method of farming, that might render it a more attractive and lucrative occupation. His unabating efforts to achieve this purpose were attended with a degree of success that awakened a new interest in agriculture, and imparted an impulse to it which it has never ceased to feel. From that time to the present, more ingenuity has been exerted to improve its utensils of labor, and more capital expended for its advancement. It is believed that Mr. Allen's attention to this great branch of industry, the remarkable success which attended his labors and experiments in it, were among the causes which led to the establishment of the

agricultural association in this county. In this association, in its establishment and progress, he took a lively interest and an active part. He was called to fill various offices in it, and afterwards was chosen its President. This office he held several years; but, as age approached, he preferred to resign it, to contract the circle of his duties, and to devote his remaining energies to professional business. After he relinquished the ministry, he was again invited to take part in the business of the association, and acted as Supervisor and President, until he had arrived at the age of seventy-three. Having ceased to act as a minister, he had leisure to open a more extensive correspondence with the editors of agricultural papers. To these papers he contributed many valuable communications. These, he tells us, were the result of observation and experiment rather than scientific research. His writings did not

abound in theory and useless speculation which seems to be characteristic of too much of our agricultural literature. In all that he wrote for the press, it seems to have been his aim to impart sound instructions and practical information in relation to the methods of cultivating different kinds of soil. He accepted an invitation to deliver an address before the Plymouth County Agricultural Society on the value of Compost Manures. The address is replete with original thought and practical suggestions. It awakened inquiry and called forth many comments in the agricultural papers of the period, and is still worthy the attention of every intelligent farmer. It received the approbation of the society, who requested a copy of it for publication, and awarded to it the price offered for the best essay on that subject. His communications to agricultural papers, and the results of experi-

ments, received honorable mention and called forth merited compliments from other States. In this department of industry, his fame, at one time seems to have crossed the Atlantic. In the year of 1849, he was elected a corresponding member of the Royal Agricultural Society of Turin, in Sardinia. He remarks in his journal that he should have prized this honor more highly, if circumstances had permitted him to be something more than a silent member. His theory and methods of farming depended almost wholly on the character of the climate and soil, and as both of these in Sardinia are quite different from what they are here, he felt it to be beyond his power to communicate suggestions that would be applicable to that latitude, or intrinsically valuable to the Royal Society that had conferred upon him the honor of membership.

When Mr. Allen gave up the ministry,

some of his friends expressed a hope that he would employ his pen in writing an extended treatise on agriculture. If his inclination had been in this direction, no man in the county could have given to the community a more practical book on this subject than he ; but it was his purpose to confine his chief attention to the cultivation of his farm. He loved the occupation next to that of his chosen profession. At first, he says, he entered upon it, to make the means of a livelihood more ample. While he found it remunerative, he felt a growing attachment to the business, and he saw no other in which he could so pleasantly pass the decline of his years. Many men whose lives have been spent in commercial or professional pursuits, towards the close of life love to spend their days in the retirement of rural scenes, where the strife for honor and office is all forgotten, where the anxieties of commercial risks made for

gain are laid aside, where they may enjoy nature in watching the growth of its vegetation, in the bloom of its flowers, the repose and summer shades of its over-hanging woods. Mr. Allen belonged decidedly to this class of older men. He loved to look at lusty oxen, to see a well cultivated field ripening for the harvest, or barns stowed with sweet hay, or cattle feeding in fine pastures or taking rest at summer under the cool foliage of well-grown trees. He had confidence in mother-earth as property, heartily responding to the sentiments offered at agricultural exhibitions, that the best bank to invest property in was a bank of earth. He acted as he believed, often by investing what could be spared from annual incomes in the purchase of large tracts of land which he foresaw would one day double their value by the growth of wood they would yield. He believed in the cultivation of forest trees, and the ex-

periments which he made here, as indeed . did everything which he attempted in agriculture, proveds uccessful. By industrious exertion and wise management he made the earth contribute every year to the enlargement of his estate, as no minister has done since, or ever did before. In this way, besides educating a large family, he was enabled to surround his old age with the comforts of life, and its luxuries if he chose, while at the same time he possessed a surplus which he was always ready to expend in liberal contributions to useful objects and the benefit of the needy. In the products of the field and the loads of wood he laid secretly at their doors, he often realized how true are the words of the Saviour, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." What a happy contrast does his old age present to that of many a clergyman, who instead of being a bestower of charity,

is obliged to become its dependent recipient.

After Mr. Allen had dissolved his ministerial connection with the people, he was twice elected a member of the Senate of Massachusetts. During his ministry he had nothing to do with politics; he always thought it unwise for a minister to mix himself up with those who felt a deep interest in the success of some particular party; he never attended town-meetings, never voted, while a minister, for officers of the State or General Government. His election, therefore, to the Senate, was an unexpected honor. He never sought the office, and his elevation to it must have been owing to the sincere respect which the public felt for him, and the confidence they reposed in him, as a man of sterling good sense, correct judgment and unswerving integrity.

While Mr. Allen was a member of the

legislature, among other questions that were agitated was that which relates to the right and duty of government to provide for the support of religion by law. He felt that this question was one of vital importance, involving the most sacred interests of society. He apprehended that the repeal of the law which required the people to pay for preaching, would increase the discouragements of the christian ministry to such extent that young men of college education and ability would turn away from it to more lucrative pursuits. One of the disagreeable concomitants of the minister's profession always has been an insufficiency of salary to meet the annual expenses incurred by the style and mode of life required by his position in society, and at the same time to reserve a portion to accumulate as a capital on which he and his family may fall back, when his popularity wanes from the wear of years, and the

salary ceases entirely through sickness or the infirmities of increasing age. Mr. Allen thought that the minister's support would be made still more precarious, and, we may add, more unequal for the people, throwing the burden upon a few of the better classes, by that mistaken legislation which would make it dependent upon the voluntary contributions of the people, instead of providing for it as it does for the support of our common schools. He feared, too, that as the minister's salary would be sometimes paid principally by a few of the richer and more influential members of society, their will would, in many instances, too much control his conduct and modify his views; and he might, from fear of offending the few, forbear to give bold utterance to his honest convictions of truth. He might be tempted to avoid a faithful rebuke of some vicious practices and faults, because they stand forth but too prominently in the

characters of his richer supporters. Fearing that the contemplated change in the law relating to the support of the ministry might thus render the latter more uncertain, as a means of a livelihood to those who enter it, and at the same time have a tendency to strip the pulpit of its independence and fidelity to duty, Mr. Allen, among other able and influential men, opposed the change as being unfavorable to the support of religious institutions. The voluntary system, however, was inaugurated, and although the working of it has not been fatal to the existence of religious societies, yet it has been sufficiently disastrous to show that our venerable friend's fears were but too well founded.

Thus far I have spoken of Mr. Allen as a teacher, a minister, an agriculturalist, and a legislator ; let me now speak of him as a parishioner. Perhaps it would be difficult to point to the precise time when his

relations as a minister ceased and that of parishioner commenced. Long after he resigned his ministerial connection with his people, he continued, occasionally, at their earnest request, to exercise the office of minister. When the pulpit was vacated by the dismissal, or death, or sickness, or accidental absence of his successors in office, he was always present to supply it, and did so frequently without remuneration. When it was previously known that he was to officiate, larger congregations than usual would assemble to hear him. There was no period in his ministry or in his life when it could be said that he had ceased to interest them. When nearly ninety years of age, the minister who was expected to preach on a certain Sunday, failing to be present to perform the service, Mr. Allen, at the request of a parishioner, ascended the pulpit, offered the prayer and preached a short extempora-

neous discourse in a manner that equally surprised and pleased the congregation. Long after he had relinquished the pulpit, the people, especially the elder portion, manifested their long, lingering attachment to his ministrations by inviting him to perform marriages, and officiate at funerals in connection with their settled pastor. Receiving such requests as these through all the ministries of the different pastors that were settled after him, he frequently found it difficult to decline them, and to act purely as a parishioner. The duties of the latter relation he was always careful to fulfill. When a clergyman resides in the parish where he has been settled many years, little jealousies are sometimes likely to arise between him and the pastor that is chosen to take his place. But while Mr. Allen was a parishioner, nothing of this kind was known to exist between him and the four pastors that

succeeded him. His prudence, kindness, and keen good sense taught him to speak and act in such a manner as to win their confidence and friendship. This seemed the more remarkable because one of these ministers, at least, preached doctrines that were discordant with Mr. Allen's views. But however unpleasant or unedifying the preaching, it did not alienate him personally from the preacher, nor did it induce him to withdraw his support. He looked to the general harmony of the parish. If the rest were satisfied, he would never thrust forward his dislikes to produce discord. Each minister that was settled while he was a parishioner, always found in him a faithful friend, a wise counsellor, a generous supporter. Each of them, more or less, according to their circumstances of need, received little testimonials of his kindness when the fatted ox was killed, or wood for the winter was drawn from

his ample forest. He deemed it prudent to take no part in parish meetings. In the choice of candidates and the settlement of ministers, he let the people exercise their own judgment and consult their own taste, never interposing his own as the standard by which they should be controlled or biased. If the large majority were satisfied, he was always disposed to sacrifice his own wishes and personal preferences to the peace of the parish. After his salary ceased, he always gave liberally to make up that of the minister who stood in the place which he formerly occupied. If ever there was a deficiency, all eyes were turned towards him, for they knew he was ready to supply it. His attendance on public worship was seldom interrupted, even between the ages of eighty and ninety. Weakness and decripitude, the usual concomitants of these advanced years, were kept in abeyance by an active use of the

limbs in walking or in agricultural pursuits. He was fond of taking pedestrian tours over his distant woodlands, even when he had passed the age of a nonagenarian. At that age, his hearing being still perfect, he seemed greatly to enjoy the services of the church, and his apostolic appearance there, seemed to make the place more holy, and inspired the minister there with a feeling that he was speaking in the presence of a patriarch.

I might speak of him not only as a parishioner but a patriot. The breaking out of the war produced a patriotic feeling which could not be expected in a man whose locks were tinged with the frost of almost ninety winters. Never was an application for aid in behalf of his suffering country made to him in vain. Never did soldier's aid society ask to have its funds replenished without finding his contributions ready and ample. Never was war-

meeting called in the town in which he did not feel a patriotic interest. At these meetings he repeatedly presided, and, aged as he was, he did it with dignity and ability. His appropriate and forcible remarks uttered with a tremulous but earnest voice, drawing a vivid contrast between the scanty provision of the soldiers in the Revolutionary War and the generous remuneration offered to those that served in the Union army, served to produce a deeper impression upon the audience than the eloquent voices of younger orators.

I cannot close without speaking of Mr. Allen as a man dealing with his fellow men. Here he had marked characteristics. He was always self reliant, and possessed a strong sense of competency to manage his own affairs. In difficult circumstances he seldom sought advice from others; he depended chiefly upon his own judgment; he respected the opinions of others, but

when, after mature deliberation, he had made up his mind on any question, it was not often that those opinions could warp his judgment one way or the other. In his intercourse with men, he felt deeply the truth of the Saviour's words where he says that we must be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. I think his general conduct was a fine exemplification of this motto. He understood well the way of the world, better than most ministers, better than men who are more in the world than they. He knew its tricks, its frauds, its secret tendencies to self-aggrandizement. Hence he was good at a trade, and commonly made a good bargain without transgressing the rules of honesty. In all his doings, he redeemed the profession from the reproach of being ignorant of common matters, and the horse-jockey and the cheater soon found that it was of no use to apply their arts with him.

His shrewdness did not partake of unfairness, but it was wisdom in dealing with the world. If he gave the town a clock, it was on condition that they should keep it in good repair. When the formation of a new society in the town drew away parishioners from his own to such extent as to make the payment of his salary more burdensome, and they came to him with a petition to have it diminished, would he consent to it? No, not he; but he generously offered to do his part towards paying it, and so it was paid. These things are mentioned only as illustrations of that innocent worldly wisdom of his which made the mass of the people respect him as a minister who knew something more than what pertained to his profession.

As Mr. Allen lived to an age much beyond that which is usually allotted to mankind, we naturally inquire for the causes which *thus* tended to prolong his

days. In his characteristic modesty, he was slow to admit that his arriva to such an age was to be attributed to any prudence or virtue in himself. In a discourse delivered to a crowded audience when he was ninety years of age, after showing that we are indebted to divine providence for a long continuance of life more than to any agency of our own, he follows up the thought with the ensuing sensible remarks.

“We advise every man,” says he, “diligently to study and obey physical laws. If obedience is not followed with a long life, it will not fail of securing a serene and quiet one while it lasts. Great peace have they who obey the laws ordained for the government of mortals. The strictest government of passions and appetites, moderation and temperance in all things, cannot be too strongly recommended ; but let us never presume that they *insure* us a

long life. The imperfection of all our work should form a sufficient reason against such a presumption. And besides, long life may not be desirable for us. God may choose to take away life to prevent evils that would certainly come upon us ; or He may cut short our days that no more guilt may accumulate upon us. These remarks seemed called for by assertions recently made by some writers that if men would faithfully observe physical laws, they would generally protract life to a hundred years. Such assertions, we think, cannot be sustained by lessons of scripture or experience. They seem to cast a cloud of guilt on all who die young, and to exalt the virtues of those who live to be old, both of which inferences, we doubt not, are unjust. We think it is not a proof of a man's goodness that he lives to be old, nor of extraordinary wickedness when a man dies young. We believe the wise and

benevolent purpose of the Creator is, that the generation of men should pass away as different ages and under various circumstances."

In accordance with the views expressed in this quotation, Mr. Allen always felt his dependence on God for life and health ; but no less deeply did he feel it to be his duty to use the means provided for their preservation. Among these means he reckoned regularity in our habits of living as the chief among these habits, the recognition of the divine goodness in daily devotions, regular exercise in the open air, strict temperance in eating and drinking, regular hours for rising and retiring to rest, an undeviating moderation on one's daily pursuits, these he deemed most important. He aimed to form and follow such habits as far as he possibly could, and this, no doubt, contributed greatly to secure to him that serene, bright and happy old age of

which all who visited him spoke with delight. This was noticed by Rev. Mr. Sewall, of Medfield, who visited him a few weeks previous to his departure. In a letter of condolence to Mr. Allen's daughter, he says: "never was I more struck with the beautiful spirit and example of a calm, trustful, happy christian old age; I could not but say, in my thought, as I left him, O that my last end might be like his. I rejoice in the memory of that brief and pleasant interview." In another part of this beautiful letter, he says: "he cherished no dark forbodings, and was scarcely sensible of the fading out of life's joys, or the decline of life's day, except as his revolving birth-days admonished him of the narrowing space between him and the grave."

When Mr. Allen had reached the close of his ninetieth year, the anniversary of his birth-day was appropriately celebrated. It

called around the familiar scenes of the homestead not only respected sons and daughters from their scattered places of abode, but troops of friends, young and old, that delighted to do honor to the aged preacher, and pastor whose ministry reached back beyond their childhood, to the days of a departed generation. While his house was thronged with visitors, he stood up, and, without notes, addressed to them a speech full of touching reminiscences. Although an ample property, gathered by a wise and skilful economy, rendered all gifts unnecessary, yet valuable ones were left at his mansion to cheer him with the respect and the good wishes they indicated, and when he had passed away, besides patrimonies to his children, Mr. Allen left a donation to the society where he had long preached,

Mrs. Austin, a lady who ranks high as an authoress, published a description of the

occasion, from which the following paragraphs are taken.

“Mr. Allen has been the father of ten children, of whom but five survive, and these are scattered each to a separate home, one as far away as a thousand miles from the old parsonage, yet not one was absent; and when the patriarch, standing at the head of his table, the wife of his youth beside him, implored the blessing of God upon it, his three sons and two daughters; with their families and more distant relations, listened with bowed heads, and in their hearts said “amen” to the earnest prayer.”

“The attendance of the parishioners in the afternoon, was general and cordial. Several valuable gifts were offered to the venerable host, among others a beautiful gold watch, of which he said, after expressing his thanks, it seemed but idle to offer a time-piepe to one so soon to exchange time for eternity.”

“At three o'clock, the simple service was opened by an address from Mr. Allen, whose best praise was given by the wet eyes of those who listened. This address was followed by an appropriate prayer by the present pastor, and this by a poem written for the occasion by Mrs. P. A. Haniford. The exercises were close by the singing of the following hymn, written also for the occasion by a daughter of the house.”

H Y M N .

Welcome home! This time-worn shepherd
Waiting on the hither shore,
Kindred, friends, the true and faithful,
Gathers to his fold once more.

Hopefully the memory lingers
On those faces gone before;
Honored friend, and child, and neighbor,
Gathered on the farther shore.

Peacefully the evening shadows
Fall on home, and hearth at last;
Brothers, waging war's commotion,
Vanish in the dreamy past.

Thanks we give, both now and ever,
For our country, fireside, home;
May this wondrous God of mercy
Build within our hearts his throne!

"Tottering steps must be my portion,
Other feet will lead the way,
'Till we see the Great Assembly:
Marching to eternal day!

Take, each one, a father's blessing!
Let it rest on thee and thine!
And the precious hope of meeting
In a better world be mine!"

After this joyful occasion, more than four years of a happy old age were added to Mr. Allen's life. His time continued to be divided between reading, brief periods of gentle work, and short walks over his cultivated fields. As eye-sight and hearing were continued to him in a remarkable degree of perfection, he greatly enjoyed intercourse with his friends, and with his books and periodicals. No symptoms of childhood weakness were visible in his declining years ; no darkness came over his intellectual powers. It was interesting to notice with what precise, well chosen words he expressed his thought on the latest opinions advanced in theology or in agriculture.

The last birth-day of his life occurred on Sunday, and as the writer of this wished to notice it by an appropriate discourse, his aversion to vanity manifested itself in a written note in which he

cautioned him not to utter exaggerating language in describing any good qualities which the writer might think belonged to his character. Some months after this, his physical system began to show marks of failure, but it was so gradual that it was difficult to discern it. He died of no disease, but wore out gently under the gradual effects of old age, and even that did not destroy the tenement of flesh until the soul within was well prepared to enter one more glorious. In taking a general survey of his life, we might identify him with one of whom the poet Bryant, has said:—

Like the kindly season has life's decline come o'er
him,

Past his manhood's summer, the frosty months
are here,

Yet were genial airs and pleasant sunshine left
him,

Leaf and fruit and blossom to deck the closing
year.

The following resolutions, offered by the Hon. JOHN A. SHAW, were adopted by the Plymouth County Agricultural Society, Oct. 30th, 1870, and serve to show in what high respect Mr. Allen was held by that body:—

“It having pleased Divine Providence to remove by death, in the course of the past year, the Rev. MORRILL ALLEN, one of the founders and most efficient members of the Plymouth County Agricultural Society, who was for many years its President, and who had sustained other important offices in connection with it, therefore,

“*Resolved*, That our gratitude is due to the Giver of all Good for having favored us so long with the services of an upright man, a useful citizen, and an active, successful and zealous laborer in our association, until removed in a good old age, like a sheaf of grain ripe for the garner.

“*Resolved*, That while we express our sympathy with the family thus bereaved, both they and we will remember that the memory of the just is blessed, and that their record is on high.

“*Resolved*, That our Secretary transmit to the bereaved family, a copy of these resolutions.



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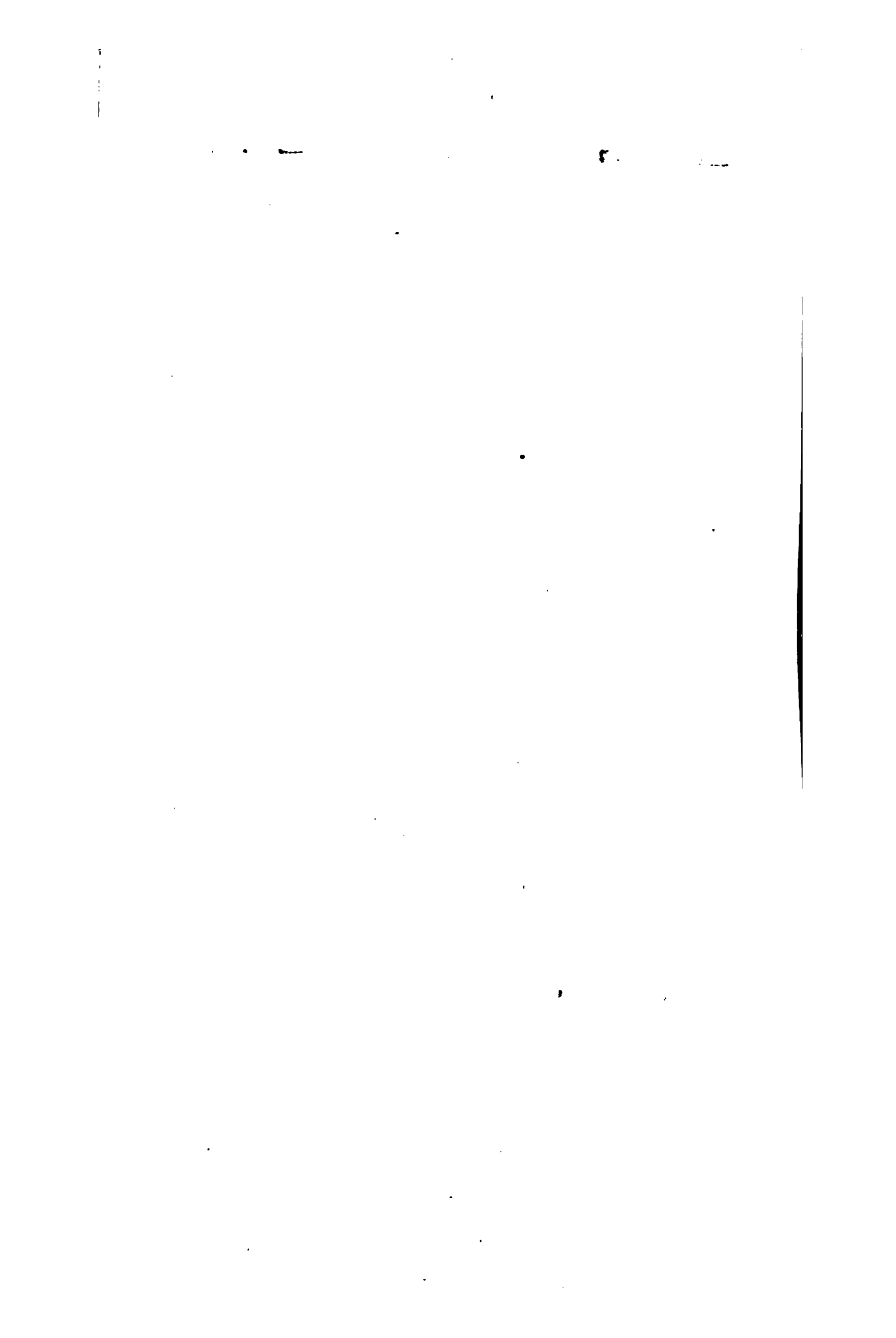
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